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Speakers cover diversity of topics at Mississippi River Commission Public Meeting at Caruthersville, Mo.

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 20, 2004 – Citizens from Missouri, Illinois and Tennessee addressed the Mississippi River Commission aboard the Corps' Motor Vessel Mississippi moored at Caruthersville, Mo., yesterday morning. The meeting was the first of several being held in conjunction with the Commission's annual "high-water" inspection trip on the Mississippi River

U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri's 8th Congressional District was the first speaker of the morning. She applauded the work of the Corps and the Memphis District for their work on the St. Johns Bayou Project. Remembering longtime project proponent Jim Robinson of the tiny community of Pinhook, she recalled his charge to the Corps to, "... just put some mud in that hole." Robinson died April 9 at Sikeston, Mo.

Also present at the meeting were representatives of Missouri Sen. Kit Bond's office and Tennessee Representative John Tanner.

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Several speakers – including David Salyers of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority and M.V. Williams of the West Tennessee Tributaries Association – said they supported implementation of the West Tennessee Tributaries Reformulated Project, and also asked for support of a demonstration project on the Obion River.

Among the other speakers, several topics dominated the testimony. Among them were calls for the Corps to help complete the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment Report, criticism and support for the Missouri River Master Water Control Plan, and calls for both more funding and less funding for environmental restoration work.

Commission member Brig. Gen. William Grisoli, commander of the Corps' Northwestern Division that oversees the Missouri River, took time at the end of the meeting to explain how the Corps arrived at a final decision on the Missouri River Plan.

These meetings give Commission members an opportunity to hear the concerns, ideas and issues important to local citizens. The meetings provide a forum for dialogue between regional residents and the Corps regarding water resources infrastructure needs in the valley, including flood control and the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project, environmental issues, recreation and navigation. All meetings are open to the public.